

# D U X B U R Y REPORTER

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## No power in a union

Supervisors, subordinates, disband bargaining groups

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DUXBURY - In the last several months, two groups of town employees have voted to disband their unions. After approximately two years of union representation, SEIU Local 888 will no longer represent many department heads and their immediate subordinates.

According to Human Resources Director Jeannie Horne, unions were formed in 2008 to represent the two groups, each of which had previously been covered under the town's personnel bylaw. During the past two years, while a contract was being negotiated, those employees' salaries have been frozen, according to Horne.

In neither case was the vote to disband the unions a close one. According to Conservation Officer Joe Grady, who spearheaded the move to disband the professional unit, the vote was 14-1, while for the support unit, it was 9-0,

according to assistant recreation director Steve Studley,

"Many of us never wanted to be part of the union," Grady said, adding that he never signed anything saying he was joining.

"We were unhappy with the whole process. We didn't feel we were being properly represented," he added.

Many of the people who were involved in originally forming the manager's union, he noted, have either left the town's employment or were ruled by the state labor relations board to be ineligible for membership. Among those who organized the union were Water Superintendent Paul Anderson, DPW Director Tom Daley and Police Chief Paul DeLuca, all of whom no longer work for the town. DeLuca was not permitted to join the union, nor was Library Director Elaine Winquist. The state labor relations unit denied them permission to

SEE UNION, PAGE 3

## SEIU claims employees pressured to quit union

FROM UNION, PAGE 1

be part of the union, said Jennifer Smith, the regional organizer for the SEIU, but the town could have permitted it.

Smith claims members of the union were encouraged to abandon the union with promises of better wages and job security. A pair of complaints filed by the SEIU with the state labor relations board claimed the town was pressuring people to leave the union. The SEIU lost in both cases.

While Smith says contract negotiations started off well, things began to change when Horne was away on a medical leave. The town, Smith says, didn't want to continue negotiations while she was out; out of respect, the union, Smith claims, agreed.

Horne says her immediate supervisor, Finance Director John Madden, took her place in the discussions.

The town, Smith said, was

stalling, and the union didn't pressure them to get back to negotiations. But, she acknowledged, with the economy suffering, and wages stagnant, it was understandable that people weren't interested in being represented by the union.

Neither Grady nor Studley, who both organized the decertification drives, said they were happy being represented by the labor union. "I personally never wanted to be involved from the get-go," Studley said.

The SEIU didn't provide the people it was representing with much information, Grady said. "They said don't worry, we'll come up with something great for you."

"People here don't need a third party speaking for them," he added.

Read a complaint filed by the SEIU on behalf of supervisory employees online at [www.wickedlocaldubxury.com](http://www.wickedlocaldubxury.com).